

Important Notice to Authors

Attached is a proof copy of your forthcoming article in *Physical Review Letters*. The accession code is LG9337.

Your paper will be in the following section of the journal: Elementary Particles and Fields

Figures submitted electronically as separate PostScript files containing color usually appear in color in the online journal. However, all figures will appear as grayscale images in the printed journal unless the color figure authorization form has been received and you have agreed to pay the necessary charges. For figures that will be color online but grayscale in print, please insure that the text and caption clearly describe the figure to readers who view it only in black and white.

No further publication processing will occur until we receive your response to this proof.

Questions & Comments to Address

The numbered items below correspond to numbers in the margin of the proof pages pinpointing the source of the question and/or comment. The numbers will be removed from the margins prior to publication.

- 1 Your Letter is currently assigned to the section on Elementary Particles and Fields. Would your Letter be better suited (and reach the appropriate intended readers) if it appeared in the section on Nuclear Physics? Please advise.
- 2 This query was generated by an automatic reference checking system. References [1, 5, 14 (first part)] could not be located in the databases used by the system. While the references may be correct, we ask that you check them.
- 3 In Ref. [5] please supply the first author's name.
- 4 Please check that our copyediting changes throughout your Letter did not change your meaning.
- 5 Please spell out "CM."

Other Items to Check

- Please check your title, author list, receipt date, and PACS numbers. More information on PACS numbers is available online at <http://publish.aps.org/PACS/>.
- Please proofread the article very carefully.
- Please check that your figures are accurate and sized properly. Figure quality in this proof is representative of the quality used in the online journal. To achieve manageable file size for online delivery, some compression and downsampling of figures does occur. Fine details may become somewhat fuzzy, especially in color figures. The print journal uses files of higher resolution and therefore details are sharper. Figures to be published in color online will appear in color on these proofs if viewed on a color monitor or printed on a color printer.

Ways to Respond

- **Web:** If you accessed this proof online, follow the instructions on the web page to submit corrections.
- **Email:** Send corrections to apsproofs@beacon.com. Include the accession code LG9337 in the subject line.
- **Fax:** Return this proof with corrections to +1.419.289.8923.
- **Mail:** Return this proof with corrections to Physical Review Letters, c/o Beacon Publishing Services, 1797 Seddon Court, Ashland OH 44805, USA.

Observation of an Exotic $S = +1$ Baryon in Exclusive Photoproduction from the Deuteron

S. Stepanyan,^{1,28} K. Hicks,² D. S. Carman,² E. Pasyuk,³ R. A. Schumacher,⁴ E. S. Smith,¹ D. J. Tedeschi,⁵ L. Todor,⁴
 G. Adams,³⁰ P. Ambrozewicz,¹³ E. Anciant,⁶ M. Anghinolfi,¹⁸ B. Asavapibhop,²⁴ G. Audit,⁶ H. Avakian,¹
 H. Bagdasaryan,²⁸ J. P. Ball,³ S. P. Barrow,¹⁴ M. Battaglieri,¹⁸ K. Beard,²¹ M. Bektasoglu,^{28,2} M. Bellis,³⁰
 B. L. Berman,¹⁵ N. Bianchi,¹⁷ A. S. Biselli,⁴ S. Boiarinov,²⁰ S. Bouchigny,^{19,1} R. Bradford,⁴ D. Branford,¹²
 W. J. Briscoe,¹⁵ W. K. Brooks,¹ V. D. Burkert,¹ C. Butuceanu,³⁶ J. R. Calarco,²⁶ B. Carnahan,⁸ S. Chen,¹⁴ L. Ciciani,²⁸
 P. L. Cole,¹ A. Coleman,³⁶ D. Cords,¹ P. Corvisiero,¹⁸ D. Crabb,³⁴ H. Crannell,⁸ J. P. Cummings,³⁰ E. De Sanctis,¹⁷
 P. V. Degtyarenko,¹ H. Denizli,²⁹ L. Dennis,¹⁴ R. De Vita,¹⁸ K. V. Dharmawardane,²⁸ K. S. Dhuga,¹⁵ C. Djalali,⁵
 G. E. Dodge,²⁸ D. Doughty,^{9,1} P. Dragovitsch,¹⁴ M. Dugger,³ S. Dytman,²⁹ O. P. Dzyubak,⁵ H. Egiyan,¹ K. S. Egiyan,³⁷
 L. Elouadrhiri,¹ A. Empl,³⁰ P. Eugenio,¹⁴ R. Fatemi,³⁴ R. J. Feuerbach,⁴ J. Ficenec,³⁵ T. A. Forest,²⁸ H. Funsten,³⁶
 M. Garçon,⁶ G. Gavalian,^{26,37} G. P. Gilfoyle,³² K. L. Giovanetti,²¹ C. I. O. Gordon,¹⁶ R. Gothe,⁵ K. Griffioen,³⁶
 M. Guidal,¹⁹ M. Guillo,⁵ L. Guo,¹ V. Gyurjyan,¹ C. Hadjidakis,¹⁹ R. S. Hakobyan,⁸ J. Hardie,^{9,1} D. Heddle,^{1,9}
 P. Heimberg,¹⁵ F. W. Hersman,²⁶ R. S. Hicks,²⁴ M. Holtrop,²⁶ J. Hu,³⁰ C. E. Hyde-Wright,²⁸ M. M. Ito,¹ D. Jenkins,³⁵
 K. Joo,¹⁰ H. G. Juengst,¹⁵ J. D. Kellie,¹⁶ M. Khandaker,²⁷ K. Y. Kim,²⁹ K. Kim,²² W. Kim,²² A. Klein,²⁸ F. J. Klein,^{8,1}
 A. V. Klimenko,²⁸ M. Klusman,³⁰ M. Kossov,²⁰ L. H. Kramer,^{13,1} Y. Kuang,³⁶ V. Kubarovsky,³⁰ S. E. Kuhn,²⁸ J. Kuhn,⁴
 J. Lachniet,⁴ D. Lawrence,²⁴ J. Li,³⁰ A. Lima,¹⁵ K. Livingston,¹⁶ K. Lukashin,¹ J. J. Manak,¹ S. McAleer,¹⁴
 J. W. C. McNabb,⁴ B. A. Mecking,¹ S. Mehrabyan,²⁹ J. J. Melone,¹⁶ M. D. Mestayer,¹ C. A. Meyer,⁴ K. Mikhailov,²⁰
 R. Minehart,³⁴ M. Mirazita,¹⁷ R. Miskimen,²⁴ V. Moiseev,²⁵ L. Morand,⁶ S. Morrow,^{6,19} V. Muccifora,¹⁷ J. Mueller,²⁹
 L. Y. Murphy,¹⁵ G. S. Mutchler,³¹ J. Napolitano,³⁰ R. Nasseripour,¹³ S. Niccolai,²¹ G. Niculescu,² I. Niculescu,¹⁵
 B. B. Niczyporuk,¹ R. A. Niyazov,²⁸ M. Nozar,^{1,27} J. O'Brien,⁸ G. V. O'Rielly,¹⁵ A. K. Opper,² M. Osipenko,¹⁸ K. Park,²²
 G. Peterson,²⁴ S. A. Philips,¹⁵ N. Pivnyuk,²⁰ D. Pocanic,³⁴ O. Pogorelko,²⁰ E. Polli,¹⁷ S. Pozdniakov,²⁰ B. M. Freedom,⁵
 J. W. Price,⁷ Y. Prok,³⁴ D. Protopopescu,¹⁶ L. M. Qin,²⁸ B. A. Raue,^{13,1} G. Riccardi,¹⁴ G. Ricco,¹⁸ M. Ripani,¹⁸
 B. G. Ritchie,³ F. Ronchetti,¹⁷ P. Rossi,¹⁷ D. Rowntree,²³ P. Rubin,³² F. Sabatié,^{6,28} C. Salgado,²⁷ J. Santoro,^{35,1}
 V. Sapunenko,¹⁸ V. S. Serov,²⁰ Y. G. Sharabian,^{1,37} J. Shaw,²⁴ S. Simionatto,¹⁵ A. V. Skabelin,²³ L. C. Smith,³⁴ D. I. Sober,⁸
 I. I. Strakovsky,¹⁵ A. Stavinsky,²⁰ P. Stoler,³⁰ R. Suleiman,²³ M. Taiuti,¹⁸ S. Taylor,²³ U. Thoma,¹ R. Thompson,²⁹ C. Tur,⁵
 M. Ungaro,³⁰ M. F. Vineyard,³³ A. V. Vlassov,²⁰ K. Wang,³⁴ L. B. Weinstein,²⁸ H. Weller,¹¹ D. P. Weygand,¹
 C. S. Whisnant,²¹ E. Wolin,¹ M. H. Wood,⁵ A. Yegneswaran,¹ and J. Yun²⁸

(CLAS Collaboration)

¹Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Laboratory, Newport News, Virginia 23606, USA

²Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA

³Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85287, USA

⁴Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213, USA

⁵University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA

⁶CEA-Saclay, DAPNIA-SPhN, F91191 Gif-sur-Yvette Cedex, France

⁷University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California 90095, USA

⁸Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. 20064, USA

⁹Christopher Newport University, Newport News, Virginia 23606, USA

¹⁰University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06269, USA

¹¹Duke University, Durham, North Carolina 27708, USA

¹²Edinburgh University, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom

¹³Florida International University, Miami, Florida 33199, USA

¹⁴Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32306, USA

¹⁵The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 20052, USA

¹⁶University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ, United Kingdom

¹⁷INFN, Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, P.O. 13, 00044 Frascati, Italy

¹⁸INFN, Sezione di Genova and Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Genova, I6146 Genova, Italy

¹⁹Institut de Physique Nucleaire d'ORSAY, IN2P3, BP1, 91406 Orsay, France

²⁰Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, 117259, Russia

²¹James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807, USA

²²Kyungpook National University, Taegu 702-701, South Korea

²³Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA

²⁴University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003, USA

²⁵Moscow State University, 119899 Moscow, Russia

²⁶University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire 03824, USA

²⁷Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia 23504, USA

²⁸Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia 23529, USA

²⁹University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260, USA

³⁰Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York 12180, USA

³¹Rice University, Houston, Texas 77005, USA

³²University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia 23173, USA

³³Union College, Schenectady, New York 12308, USA

³⁴University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia 22901, USA

³⁵Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061, USA

³⁶College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23187, USA

³⁷Yerevan Physics Institute, 375036 Yerevan, Armenia

(Received 16 July 2003)

In an exclusive measurement of the reaction $\gamma d \rightarrow K^+ K^- pn$, a narrow peak that can be attributed to an exotic baryon with strangeness $S = +1$ is seen in the $K^+ n$ invariant mass spectrum. The peak is at 1.542 ± 0.005 GeV/ c^2 with a measured width of 0.021 GeV/ c^2 FWHM, which is largely determined by experimental mass resolution. The statistical significance of the peak is $(5.2 \pm 0.6)\sigma$. The mass and width of the observed peak are consistent with recent reports of a narrow $S = +1$ baryon by other experimental groups.

DOI:

PACS numbers: 13.60.Rj, 14.20.Jn, 14.80.-j

High-energy neutrino and antineutrino scattering experiments [1] have established that sea quarks ($q\bar{q}$ pairs) are part of the ground-state wave function of the nucleon. In addition, results from pion electroproduction experiments in the Δ -resonance region, together with other experiments, have shown [2] the presence of a pion “cloud” surrounding the valence quarks of the nucleon. In this sense, five-quark ($qqqq\bar{q}$) configurations are mixed with the standard three-quark valence configuration. However, it is natural to ask whether a five-quark configuration exists where the \bar{q} has a different flavor than (and hence cannot annihilate with) the other four quarks. Such states are not forbidden by QCD [3,4], and definite evidence of pentaquark states would be an important addition to our understanding of QCD. In fact, the question of which color singlet configurations exist in nature lies at the heart of nonperturbative QCD. A baryon with the exotic strangeness quantum number $S = +1$ is a natural candidate for a pentaquark state.

The general idea of a five-quark state has been around since the late 1960s [5]. Recently, symmetries within the chiral soliton model were used by Diakonov, Petrov, and Polyakov [6] to predict an antidecuplet of five-quark resonances with spin and parity $J^\pi = \frac{1}{2}^+$. The lowest mass member, an isosinglet with valence quark configuration $uudd\bar{s}$ giving strangeness $S = +1$ (originally called the Z^+ but now renamed as the Θ^+ [7]), has a predicted mass of approximately 1.53 GeV/ c^2 and a width of ~ 0.015 GeV/ c^2 . The narrow width, similar to that of the $\Lambda(1520)$ baryon resonance with strangeness $S = -1$, is largely constrained by symmetries of the coupling constants and the phase space of the decay to a KN final state.

The existence of the Θ^+ has been suggested by several recent experiments. The LEPS Collaboration at the SPring-8 facility in Japan recently reported [8] the observation of an $S = +1$ baryon at 1.54 GeV/ c^2 with a FWHM less than 0.025 GeV/ c^2 from the inclusive reaction $\gamma n \rightarrow K^-(K^+ X)$ where the target neutron is bound in carbon, and the residual nucleus is assumed to be a spectator. This measurement reported a statistical significance of $4.6 \pm 1.0\sigma$. Also, the DIANA Collaboration at ITEP [9] recently announced results from an analysis of bubble-chamber data for the reaction $K^+ n \rightarrow K^0 p$, where the neutron is bound in a xenon nucleus, which shows a narrow peak at 1.539 ± 0.002 GeV/ c^2 . The statistical significance of the ITEP result is 4.4σ .

One might wonder how an (nK^+) resonance could have evaded earlier searches. The Particle Data Group has summarized these searches most recently in 1986 [5] saying that the results permit no definite conclusion for an $S = +1$ resonance. A more recent phase shift analysis for $K^+ N$ scattering by Hyslop *et al.* [10] finds weak resonance behavior in the P_{01} , D_{03} , P_{13} , and D_{15} partial waves, but none of these “resonancelike structures” (in the words of Ref. [10]) have convincing phase motion. We note that the $K^+ n$ database is sparse for low-energy K^+ beams, and a narrow resonance could have escaped detection [11].

The present experiment is an exclusive measurement on deuterium for the reaction $\gamma d \rightarrow K^+ K^- p(n)$ where the final state neutron is reconstructed from the missing momentum and energy. The data presented here were taken at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility with the CLAS detector [12] and the photon tagging system [13] in Hall B. Photon beams were produced by 2.474 and

3.115 GeV electrons incident on a bremsstrahlung radiator of thickness 10^{-4} radiation lengths, giving a tagged photon flux of approximately 4×10^6 γ 's per second. The maximum tagged photon energy was 95% of the electron beam energy. The integrated tagged photon flux above 1.51 GeV was 1.64×10^{12} at 2.474 GeV and 0.70×10^{12} at 3.115 GeV. The tagged photon energy is measured with a resolution of between 0.003 and 0.005 GeV, depending on the energy. The photons struck a liquid-deuterium target of thickness 10 cm.

The event trigger was formed when a charged particle hit two scintillator planes [the “start counter” around the target and a “time-of-flight” (TOF) counter a few meters away], in coincidence with an electron detected in the tagging system. The particle identification was performed using the reconstructed momentum and charge from tracking, together with the measured TOF. The analysis focused on events with a detected proton, K^+ and K^- (and no other charged particles) in the final state. Either the K^+ or the K^- in the event was required to have a time at the interaction vertex within 1.5 ns of the proton's vertex time. Also, the incident photon time at the interaction vertex was required to be within 1.0 ns of the proton (to eliminate accidental coincidences). The missing mass (MM) of the selected events is plotted in Fig. 1, which shows a peak at the neutron mass on top of a small background. A fit to the distribution (solid line) yields a mass resolution of $\sigma = 0.009$ GeV/ c^2 .

The reaction $\gamma d \rightarrow K^+ K^- p(n)$ selects the Θ^+ decays to the $K^+ n$ final state. It is likely that production of the Θ^+ in this final state proceeds on the neutron via

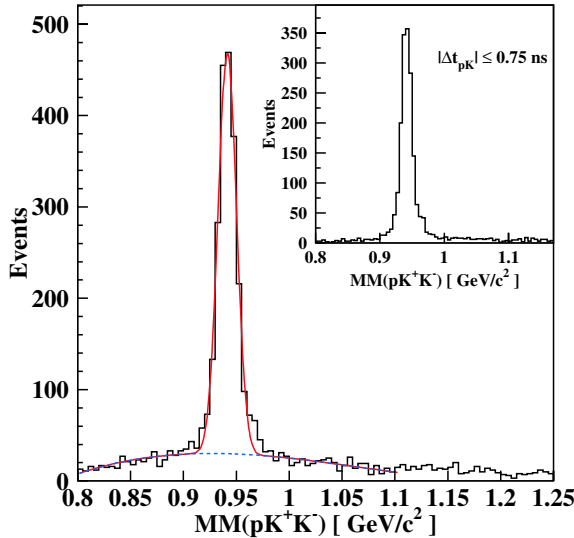


FIG. 1 (color). Missing mass spectrum for the $\gamma d \rightarrow p K^+ K^- X$ reaction, after timing cuts to identify the charged particles and the coincident photon, which shows a peak at the neutron mass. There is a small, broad background from misidentified particles and other sources. The inset shows the neutron peak with a tighter requirement on the timing between the proton and kaons.

t -channel K^+ exchange, similar to the production of the $\Lambda(1520)$ on the proton, where the dominant mechanism is t -channel K^- exchange [14]. If the proton is a spectator during Θ^+ production, it will not be seen in our detector due to its small momentum [15]. However, in some fraction of events, the K^- and the proton may be involved in the final state interaction, as shown in Fig. 2. While the production of the Θ^+ does not require a rescattering, such events increase the probability of detecting the K^- 's and the protons in the final state by rescattering them into the acceptance region of CLAS. By requiring an exclusive process, we are able to fully reconstruct the unobserved neutron, which aids significantly in reducing background. Another advantage of this exclusive measurement is that no corrections for the Fermi momentum of the neutron are needed, so the width of the neutron peak in Fig. 1 is limited only by the resolution of the CLAS detector system. Events within $\pm 3\sigma$ of the neutron peak were kept for further analysis. The background in this region is about 15% of the total, mostly from pions that are misidentified as kaons.

There are several known reactions, such as photoproduction of mesons (that decay into $K\bar{K}$) or excited hyperons (that decay into pK^-), that contribute to the same final state. We now discuss the explicit cuts we have made to remove the main background sources from our final event sample in order to enhance our signal relative to background. The ϕ meson at 1.02 GeV/ c^2 , which decays into a K^+ and K^- , is produced primarily at forward angles [16]. These events are easily identified using the invariant mass of the $K^+ K^-$ pair, $M(K^+ K^-)$, as shown in Fig. 3 (top). In order to remove the ϕ mesons, events with $M(K^+ K^-) < 1.07$ GeV/ c^2 are rejected.

Similarly, the $\Lambda(1520)$ resonance can be produced by the $\gamma p \rightarrow K^+ \Lambda$ reaction with a subsequent decay of the Λ to a proton and K^- . A peak corresponding to the $\Lambda(1520)$ is seen in the invariant mass spectrum of the pK^- system, $M(pK^-)$, as shown in Fig. 3 (bottom). Unlike ϕ mesons, $\Lambda(1520)$'s can be produced in conjunction with Θ^+ 's and still conserve net strangeness. However, even though there is a large cross section for producing $\Lambda(1520)K^+$ on the proton followed by $K^+ n$ rescattering, the kinematics is a poor match for Θ^+ production, since, as was described

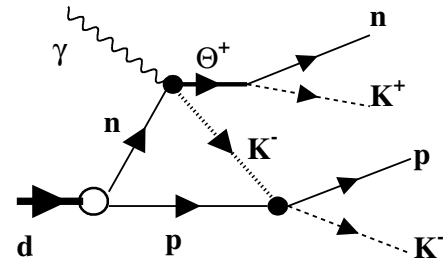


FIG. 2. A rescattering diagram that could contribute to the exclusive reaction mechanism that produces the Θ^+ and an energetic proton through final state interactions. Note that the Θ^+ is produced independently of the secondary scattering.

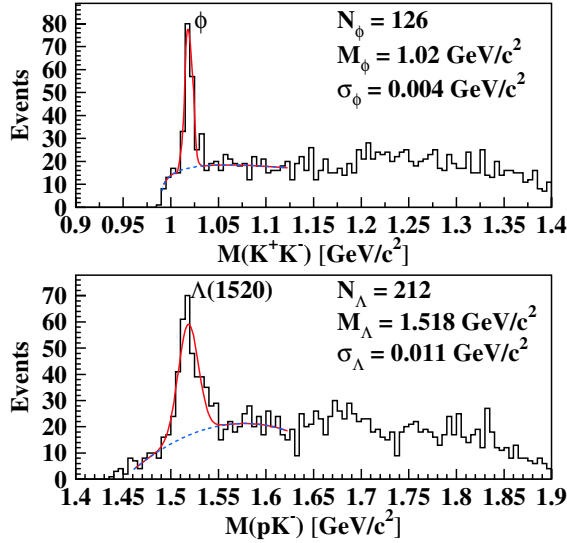


FIG. 3 (color). Invariant mass of the K^+K^- system (top) and the pK^- system (bottom) showing peaks at the mass of known resonances. These resonances are removed in the analysis by placing cuts on the peaks shown. Results for the number of counts (N), the mass (M), and the widths (σ) from fits are also given.

above, this is likely a t -channel process with forward production of the K^+ in the CM frame. In our kinematics the average momentum for the K^+ in the production of the $\Lambda(1520)$ is ~ 0.8 GeV/ c , while for the production of the Θ^+ in the K^+n interaction, the average momentum of the kaon should be approximately 0.45 GeV/ c . For this reason, we reject events with $1.485 < M(pK^-) < 1.551$ GeV/ c^2 ($\pm 3\sigma$ cut from the peak) to improve our signal to background ratio.

Two other event selection requirements were applied, based on kinematics. The first one requires that the missing momentum of the undetected neutron must be greater than 0.08 GeV/ c . Below this value, the neutron is likely a spectator to other reaction mechanisms. Our studies show that increasing the value of this cutoff does not change the final results—in particular, it does not eliminate the peak shown below but does reduce the statistics in the $M(nK^+)$ spectrum. The second requirement concerns the K^+ momentum. Monte Carlo simulations of the Θ^+ decay from an event distribution uniform in phase space show that the K^+ momentum rarely exceeds 1.0 GeV/ c . The data also show that K^+ momenta greater than 1.0 GeV/ c are associated with an invariant mass of the nK^+ system above ~ 1.7 GeV/ c^2 . Events with a K^+ momentum above 1.0 GeV/ c were removed to reduce this background.

The final nK^+ invariant mass spectrum, $M(nK^+)$, is shown in Fig. 4 [17], along with a fit (solid line) to the peak and a Gaussian plus constant term fit to the background (dashed line). For the fit given, there are 43 counts in the peak at a mass of 1.542 ± 0.005 GeV/ c^2 with a width (FWHM) of 0.021 GeV/ c^2 . The width is consistent with the instrumental resolution. The uncertainty of

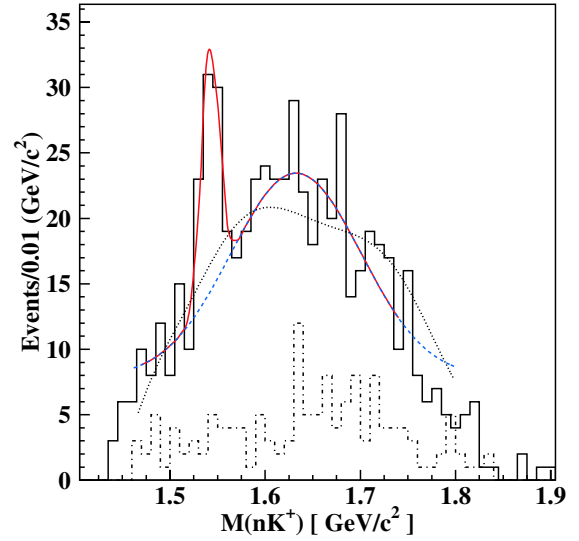


FIG. 4 (color). Invariant mass of the nK^+ system, which has strangeness $S = +1$, showing a sharp peak at the mass of 1.542 GeV/ c^2 . A fit (solid line) to the peak on top of the smooth background (dashed line) gives a statistical significance of 5.8σ . The dotted curve is the shape of the simulated background. The dash-dotted histogram shows the spectrum of events associated with $\Lambda(1520)$ production.

0.005 GeV/ c^2 in the mass is due to calibration uncertainties of the photon tagging spectrometer [13], the electron beam energy, and the momentum reconstruction in CLAS. The statistical significance of this peak is estimated based on fluctuations of the background over a $\pm 2\sigma$ window centered on the peak, giving $43/\sqrt{54} = 5.8\sigma$. The spectrum of events removed by the $\Lambda(1520)$ cut is shown in Fig. 4 by the dash-dotted histogram and does not appear to be associated with the peak at 1.542 GeV/ c^2 .

The shape of the expected $M(nK^+)$ mass spectrum was investigated by a Monte Carlo simulation using GEANT [18] based simulation tools for the CLAS detector and the algorithm used for the data analysis. We studied four-body phase space production of the pK^+K^-n final state and the production of the three-body phase space in the pK^+K^- final state (K^+K^- in s -wave). No peaklike structures were visible in the $M(nK^+)$ distributions of these two final states. We used the shapes of these distributions to fit the experimental $M(nK^+)$ spectrum. The fitted shape of the background is shown by the dotted line in Fig. 4. The relative weights of three-body and four-body phase space events determined by the fit was 3:1. The statistical significance of the peak at 1.542 GeV/ c^2 in the fit using this simulated background was 4.8σ .

A separate Monte Carlo study was carried out to examine the production of known resonances via the reaction $\gamma d \rightarrow K^+Y^*N$, where the Y^* decays to a K^-N followed by one of the kaons rescattering off the spectator nucleon. This study [19] was unable to produce structures narrower than about 4 times the CLAS resolution and

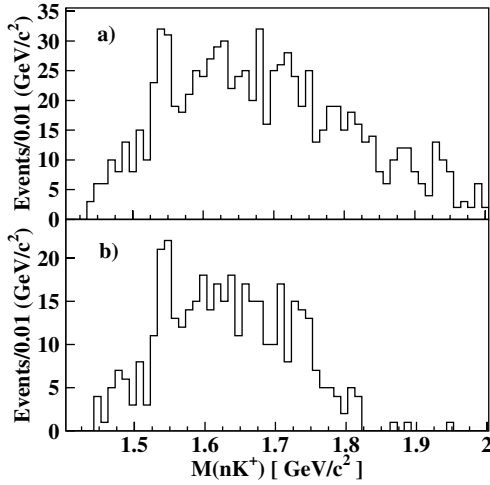


FIG. 5. Spectra of the (nK^+) invariant mass for different cuts: (a) no cut on the K^+ momentum; (b) tight cut on proton-kaon vertex time. See the text for details.

concluded that these rescattering processes are not responsible for such a narrow structure in the $M(nK^+)$ spectrum.

The sensitivity of the peak to the placement of event selection cuts was studied, and the conclusion is that the peak at $1.542 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ is very robust. For example, removing the K^+ momentum limit results in the spectrum shown in Fig. 5(a). Alternatively, tightening the cuts on proton-kaon timing, $|\Delta t_{pK}| < 0.75 \text{ ns}$, allows less background into the spectrum, as shown in the inset of Fig. 1. The shape of the $M(nK^+)$ spectrum for this selection is shown in Fig. 5(b) and remains essentially unchanged from Fig. 4. In all we tried ten variations of event cut placement and/or different fitting functions. All fits reproduce the measured data with reduced χ^2 in the range between 0.6 and 1. The estimated statistical significance in those ten cases ranges from 4.6σ to 5.8σ , which we use to derive the conservative estimate for the statistical significance of our result of $5.2 \pm 0.6\sigma$.

A neutron and K^+ can couple to both isospin zero and isospin one states. If the Θ^+ has $I = 1$, then there should be two other members of the isotriplet, a neutral and a doubly charged state. The doubly charged state would couple to pK^+ . We examined the invariant mass $M(pK^+)$ using the same event selection as before. The statistics are limited, but there is no clear peak in the signal region. It should be noted that the CLAS acceptance for the pK^+ system is not the same as for the nK^+ system, so the two spectra are not directly comparable. The featureless $M(pK^+)$ spectrum (not shown) suggests that the peak at $1.542 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ in the $M(nK^+)$ spectrum is an isosinglet, but it is difficult to draw a firm conclusion based on the current data.

These results from CLAS, together with other experiments [8,9], now provide convincing evidence for the existence of an $S = +1$ baryon state at a mass

of $1.542 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ with a small intrinsic width. In this Letter we presented evidence for this state with a statistical significance in the range of $5.2 \pm 0.6\sigma$, depending on estimates of the background and on the event selection criteria. However, more studies are needed before this $S = +1$ state can be conclusively identified with the Θ^+ predicted in Ref. [6]. Further evidence for the Θ^+ should be searched for in a variety of reactions, in addition to the ones mentioned here. Spin, isospin, and parity of this state remain to be established in future experiments.

We acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the staff of the Accelerator Division and the Physics Division at Jefferson Lab that made this experiment possible. This work is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Science Foundation, the French Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique, the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, the Italian Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare, the Korea Science and Engineering Foundation, and the U.K. Engineering and Physical Research Sciences Council. The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) operates the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility for the U.S. Department of Energy under Contract No. DE-AC05-84ER40150.

-
- [1] D. H. Perkins, *Contemp. Phys.* **16**, 173 (1975).
 - [2] K. Joo *et al.*, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **88**, 122001 (2002).
 - [3] D. Strottman, *Phys. Rev. D* **20**, 748 (1979).
 - [4] H. J. Lipkin, *Nucl. Phys.* **A625**, 207 (1997).
 - [5] Particle Data Group, *Author et al.*, *Phys. Lett.* **170B**, 289 (1986).
 - [6] D. Diakonov, V. Petrov, and M. Polyakov, *Z. Phys. A* **359**, 305 (1997).
 - [7] D. Diakonov (private communication).
 - [8] T. Nakano *et al.*, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **91**, 012002 (2003).
 - [9] V. V. Barmin *et al.*, *Phys. At. Nucl.* **66**, 1715 (2003).
 - [10] J. S. Hyslop, R. A. Arndt, L. D. Roper, and R. L. Workman, *Phys. Rev. D* **46**, 961 (1992).
 - [11] R. A. Arndt (private communication).
 - [12] B. A. Mecking *et al.*, *Nucl. Instrum. Methods Phys. Res., Sect. A* **503**, 513 (2003).
 - [13] D. Sober *et al.*, *Nucl. Instrum. Methods Phys. Res., Sect. A* **440**, 263 (2000).
 - [14] D. Barber *et al.*, *Z. Phys. C* **7**, 17 (1980); S. Barrow *et al.*, *Phys. Rev. C* **64**, 044601 (2001).
 - [15] The minimum momentum of charged particles detected in CLAS is angle dependent [12] and approximately $0.3 \text{ GeV}/c$ for the kinematics of this reaction.
 - [16] H. J. Besch *et al.*, *Nucl. Phys.* **B70**, 257 (1974); E. Anciant *et al.*, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **85**, 4682 (2000).
 - [17] None of the presented mass distributions are acceptance corrected.
 - [18] CERN Applications Software Group, CERN Program Library Long Writeup W5013, 1993.
 - [19] C. Meyer, Jefferson Lab CLAS Note No. 03-009, 2003.